

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the examination of the application that is evidenced by the Official Action of November 18, 2005. Applicants also appreciate the indication that Claims 1-11 and 21-24 are allowed and Claims 13-20 recite allowable subject matter. In response to the Official Action, Applicants have rewritten Claim 13 in independent form and made minor corrections to dependent Claims 14-15 as requested by the Examiner. Thus, the sole outstanding issue is the rejection of Claim 12 based on US Patent No. 6,240,485.

Claim 12 is Patentable Over US Patent No. 6,240,485

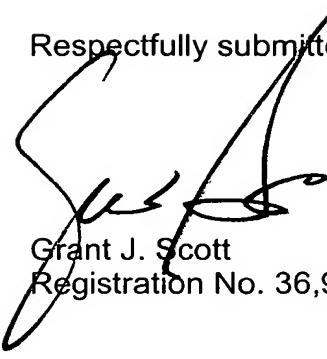
Applicants acknowledge that the '485 patent discloses a depth cascaded CAM system, however, this disclosed CAM system does not suggest the subject matter of Claim 12. As illustrated by FIG. 13 of the '485 patent, the "depth" (i.e., memory capacity) of the CAM system 1300 is increased by using a plurality of CAM chips – shown as CAM 1302, CAM 1304 and CAM 1306. These CAM chips are coupled in parallel to a command bus (CBUS) and an instruction bus (IBUS). Thus, the application of a LEARN instruction to the CAM system 1300 arrives at each CAM chip in parallel (i.e., at the same time) – which is similar to the admitted prior art illustrated at FIG. 1 and described at page 3 of the present application.

Applicants submit that Claim 12 is not only clearly distinguishable from the '485 patent, but Claim 12 is also distinguishable from the admitted prior art described by FIGS. 2A-2B of the present application. This is because neither the '485 patent nor the admitted prior art of FIGS. 2A-2B discloses or suggests a "distributed control architecture" within a cascaded chain of CAM chips that support offset timing of learn operations, as recited by Claim 12. This architecture is described more fully throughout the present application. (See, e.g., page 9, lines 8-17).

Based on this clear distinction between the subject matter of Claim 12 and the cited prior art, Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

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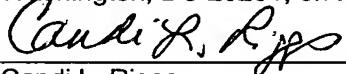
Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first-class mail in an envelope addressed to: Mail Stop Amendment, Commissioner for Patents, Washington, DC 20231, on November 22, 2005.



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Date of Signature: November 22, 2005